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ABSTRACT

Briefly described is a San Diego State University course in which students became aware of linkages with community groups representing families from Third World countries. Students were taught material related to the administration of early childhood programs. Summaries of student research reports are included. Student reports focused on life experiences of the Hmong, Vietnamese, Ethiopians, Iraqis, Filipinos, Nicaraguans, Hispanics, Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, Laotians, Indochinese, Salvadorians, and Native Americans, and on immigrants and Head Start, migrant education in San Diego, school district children's centers, and California and Third World countries. Basic principles for working with parents from diverse ethnic groups are listed. (RH)

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EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS AND PARENTS FROM THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES.

Final Report to Consortium for International Cooperation in Higher Education, December 1988; summary presented at the NAECTE Poster Session in Anaheim, CA on November 11, 1988.

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A central focus of the Spring 1988 class in Advanced Administration of Child Development Programs (FSCS 577) was the component called ***Early Childhood Program Administrators and Parents from Third-World Countries.*** The catalog description of this class, which has been taught each year since 1968, is "Problems of organization in conducting programs for young children; interrelationships of staff; personnel practices; communication with teaching staff, parents, and community; records and reports." Students became aware of linkages with community groups representing families from Third World countries. The linkage project was found to be an appropriate way to present course materials related to administration of early childhood programs. Class membership was composed of senior level and graduate students with previous coursework in working with parents and in basic management methodology.

The project consisted of the following sequence:

1. Preliminary readings and a videotape (from the consortium) introduced students to the concept of studying linkages related to young children and their families and to Hamilton's concept of Third World relationships. Materials specific to California and San Diego ethnic composition were distributed and discussed.

2. Each member of the class searched for an article appropriate to the overall topic. A summary was duplicated for distribution to the class and presented as an oral report with discussion.

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3. Students either visited programs (such as Head Start) in which a majority of the children are representative of specific ethnic groups, attended parent meetings conducted by the programs, interviewed representatives of the groups, or developed other strategies for understanding the family relationships and their linkages to their countries of origin. Each class member made an intensive study of one distinct group which was presented orally to the class and as a written report with standard documentation of sources to the instructor. Summaries of the reports are attached.

4. Representatives from three major immigrant groups in San Diego spoke to the class and distributed materials to indicate how administrators of child development programs might best work with parents belonging to those groups. A videotape made of this presentation will be utilized for subsequent classess and is available for purchase through Media Technology Services at San Diego State University.

Setting for the Study

San Diego has a wide diversity of families with Third World origins. In a report submitted to the city Board of Education on December 8, 1987, it was stated that the non-white children in elementary school had gone from 42,000 in 1987 to 66,000 for Fall, 1988. Latino students, including Central American and Mexican, went from 21% last year to 21.8%. Filipino children increased from 7.6% to 7.9% and Indo-Chinese went from 7.3% to 7.5%. Of the 116,000 children enrolled September 1988, only 43% were white. In 1987, 44.8% were thus categorized. It was estimated that the percentage of white children in elementary school would decrease to 40% by 1990. It should be noted that increased percentages of children from non-white families are already in the preschool population or will soon be entering it. Their parents are enrolling them in child care centers or in compensatory classes like Head Start. The first contact persons they are liable to become involved with in the education of their children will be the administrators of preschool centers. It was the objective of the project to provide a learning experience for students who will soon become early childhood program administrators and to provide dissemination of its results to others who will be enabled to deal more appropriately with these parents who are on the interface between their old lives and the new ones.

Summaries Of Research Reports

Hmong. Dawn Johnson

The Hmong,a mountainous and semi-nomadic rural people that lived in the highlands of Laos. Since 1975, their settlement and assimilation into modern industrialized society as refugees has been about as difficult as originally leaving their war torn homeland. The focus of this paper was primarily on the family and how their assimilation has affected the schools, churches, and the community of Linda Vista. This was accomplished through extensive research and personal interviews with key people in the community who were instrumental in helping the Hmong resettle to a vastly different way of life. The oral report was complemented by a display of Hmong embroidery and handicrafts, with sticky rice for all to sample.

Vietnamese. Jane Whitney

Following a historical and geographical orientation, a lengthy discussion of "ways of life" centered upon the goal of harmony for Vietnamese people. Problems brought about through practices of their homeland, such as leaving young children at home alone, were discussed. Name order and diacritical markings were explained. Questionnaires answered by fathers affirmed approval of the education being provided for their children. Interviews revealed concern and support for family members remaining in Vietnam. Awareness of cultural differences is becoming increasingly important in any educational setting. Body language, foods, discipline, student-teacher relations, language, and philosophy of life are considerations that the preschool teacher might make in working with the Vietnamese family or with any other ethnic group.

Ethiopian. Anne Exline

Despite popular images in this country of drought and starvation in Ethiopia, upper income immigrants in San Diego are here for political reasons. Interviews show that modifications are being made in the strict childrearing practices traditional in the culture, but that Amharic is retained as the home language and many other customs are retained. Because San Diegans have not distinguished between Ethiopians and native-born Blacks, prejudice has been based upon racial, rather than immigrant status.

Iraqi. Maryann Powell

Although local Iraqi families appear to range from conservative and traditional to assimilated, they are primarily male dominated and it is expected that mothers care for their own children unless out-of-home care is absolutely necessary. Many are from Iraq and are Roman Catholics who are given support by their church. Others are Islamic and maintain the monthlong fast of Ramadan, together with other traditions. Parent interviews indicated concern with the lack of disciplined behavior of children in local schools, the improper toileting facilities, and the competitive spirit. Arabic or a regional dialect is usually spoken at home.

Filipino. Teri Serpico

The diverse ethnic background of Filipino people, together with their emphasis upon education as a key to success, must be recognized. A community college student majoring in child development, mother of a small son, was interviewed. She emphasized family values, respect for elders, and the problems of obtaining employment in the United States that was consistent with training in the Philipines. She emphasized the need for children to learn both standard English and Tagolog. As an immigrant herself at age six, she discussed differences and similarities between her own early childhood and that taught in the United States.

Classroom Assimilation for Filipino Students. Becky Suarez

The linkage developed in this report was between the student, who had come from the Philipines as a child, and a family friend who is now retired from multi-cultural education. The paper reviewed geography of the Philipines, the racial ancestry and culture of the people, their languages, and educational background. About 120,000 immigrants in the San Diego area are from the Philipines. Attitudes of "bahala na" (come what may) and "pakikisama" (getting along together), "amor propio" (self esteem) and "hiya" (shame) were clarified, as were "utang na loob" (a debt of gratitude) and "pakikisama" (cooperation). These may be misunderstood by teachers who value initiative, creativity, and independence. Guidelines were given for helping Filipino children in the classroom.

Nicaraguans. Barbara Cannon

An unsuccessful attempt was made to get information from organizations working with Central Americans. Library resources were largely outdated and/or biased. Through the Nicaraguan Interfaith Committee for Action, this student took preliminary steps to establish a sister relationship between a local day care center and one in that country. A lengthy interview with a 1964 immigrant was conducted, with emphasis upon the difficulties and hardships she has endured while working in a factory; she feels that she has been exploited and that it took years to regain her self esteem.

Hispanics. Linda Mauritz-Jones

The difficulties for a child entering a day care center, a new environment with only English spoken, American food served, and American clothing worn, were discussed by this Hispanic student. Suggestions for parental and community participation, the need to learn other languages, and the importance of providing basic health care were emphasized. Both adult and children's resource readings were listed. Food and preschool activities were included.

Mexican Migration. Christina Griffin

This lengthy research paper was accompanied by slides showing comparable towns near San Diego, one Hispanic in culture and the other Anglo. The paper gave an overview of the process, the problems, and the results of the Mexican migration, the linkage developed by staff of early childhood programs, and a survey of parents in a largely Hispanic Head Start program. This bi-lingual center honors both American and Mexican holidays, but has also developed a unique similation program of "foreign travel" by which children experience use of documents to cross borders into foreign countries. Parents and staff work together to create the foods, clothing, and atmosphere of the featured destination. The program director stressed benefits to parents of the services provided by Head Start, and also such acculturation practices as her insistence that they are prompt in following an American time schedule.

Mexican-American Customs and Celebrations. Pamela Ryan

Implications of cultural democracy and the melting pot theory were discussed, with acculteration to a middle class American pattern being questioned as the ideal situation. The need for bi-cultural identity is necessary for Mexican-American children so that they can function effectively in both worlds. The traditional sociocultural system is composed of four major value clusters: 1) identification with family, community, and ethnic group; 2) personalization of interpersonal relationships; 3) status and role definition in family and community; and 4) Mexican Catholic ideology as reinforcement of these. Variables contributing to diversity in maintenance of linkages with Mexican customs were explained and their validity was reinforced by an interview with a school official in a bilingual program. Efforts to meet the needs of Mexican American families at a Head Start program were detailed. Linkage was also demonstrated by the school bus friendship of the student's daughter and a Spanish-speaking girl.

Hispanic Culture and Teenage Pregnancy. Jessica Chester

The focus of this paper was the Hispanic culture in San Diego as it relates to teenage pregnancy. Visits were made to a high school parenting program providing child care for student parents, a family planning center, and a medical center with an emphasis upon adolescent medicine. Interviews with students in the high school indicated that there had been no birth control information provided at home, that those students have little religious affiliation and that they do not think much about their Mexican heritage. This was confirmed by interviews with personnel in the agency programs.

Laotian. DeLayne Harmon

The New Year's celebration sponsored by the Lao Community Organizations Councilwas videotaped for the class. It was designed to assist immigrants with their assimilation process and to preserve their own culture. The ethnic group from Laos is an important segment of the 15,000 Southeast Asians in the San Diego area. The event included cultural exhibitions, feasting, and dancing.

Indochinese. Jacqueline Tonnaer

A large percentage of the Indochinese refugees admitted to the United States during the past thirteen years have settled in the San Diego area. The Bayside Settlement House, established in 1932, has expanded its services to assist this new challenge. An interview with its director emphasized the relationship between client needs and the acculturation process. A Senior Center, a family service program, and a recreation after-school center are provided. The respect for elders has made acculturation classes for older family members an important component, since they would not want to be in the same classroom as younger members of their families. Bilingual caseworkers assist in many ways. A monthly "buying club" brings foodstuffs for a marketplace in which pricers are lower than the local store. Extensive support services are provided to assist these families who are passing through a crisis period of adjustment to the American culture after a period of trauma.

Salvadoran. Barrie Zuehlke

This report included a review of recent events in El Salvador, a country of extreme poverty whose principle source of income is from the export of coffee. An inconclusive study was done of CISPES, the Community in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador. This organization raises money for humanitarian aid and protests the proportion of taxes spent for military purposes that would be better invested in life-enhancing priorities such as health and nutrition, child care, and similar services.

Third World Immigrants and the Beaumont Program. John Bacon

The director and assistant director of the Beaumont Head Start program were interviewed and their program was reviewed. National data was compared with that of Beaumont. This center has a 40% Asian enrollment, with a director originally from Thailand; the high Asian enrollment is in part because of the large numbers of eligible families and in part to the trust that these families have developed in a program headed by "one of their own." Languages spoken by the children include those from Hmong, Vietnamese, Laotian and Tai peoples. At the end of the year, most have mastered English enough to enter regular kindergarten. Issues of education and employment are commonly found on the family needs assessment. Many of the families suffer stress from transition. Also, their expectations for young children are high and may lead to what is considered abuse. It was recommended that parent education materials should be translated into Asian languages, that culturally sensitive resource books should be widely distributed, and that education needs to be done to show that cultural similarities are greater than differences. The director expressed concern over formation of destructive Asian juvenile gangs and the need to take immediate intervention measures in this recently semi-rural Southern California community.

Migrant Education Program in San Diego. Debbie Porec

Established in 1966 to provide supplemental educational and supportive services to children of migrant families, the program serves more than 750,000 children in the United States. In San Diego, these are primarily Mexican in ethnic origin. Services of community aides were explained, with dental programs given as an example of support. A computerized network system helps record keeping of immunizations and other data.

San Diego School District Children's Centers. Sylvia Ruvalcaba

California Children's Centers, first opened during World War II, currently enroll about 2400 children at 33 sites in San Diego. Families are low income or the children are in need of protective services, and fees are on a sliding schedule. Although there have formerly been three Race and Human Facilitators in the city schools, there is now only one. She conducts staff inservice programs and parent education workshops. Packets of materials, in English, are available. A survey on ethnocentricity was not yet complete when the report was due, but it indicated that 28% of enrolled children were Hispanic, 35% white, 30% black, 4% Indo-Chinese, 3% Asian Pacific, and small percentages belonged to other groups. Investigation indicated that linkages with other cultures are not a matter of much concern for this state funded program.

Native Americans. Sharon Hankins and Christine Hughes

This report was a comparison of the programs available for preschool Native American children with those of other ethnic groups. Head Start centers encourage cross-cultural programming choices made at individual sites. However, the "Indian" unit usually consists of stereotyped ideas. A review was made of elementary and secondary schools and it was found that little is being taught even in those with large Indian enrollments. A few "wonder teachers" were described. Community awareness programs of local reservations were investigated. It was found that some preschool and youth groups have outstanding programs to develop ethnic pride and teach cultural awareness for children on various San Diego area reservations; the success of their graduates indicates their value and supports the need to provide supportive programs for all ethnic groups. A resource list was developed and distributed.

California and Third World Countries. Carol Ann Pettengill

A portion of this paper reviewed the March workshop in Sacramento on "Impact of World Trade and Multinational Corporations on Children and Families in California" which emphasized the importance of international trade. A second part described the World Vision program and included analysis of overpopulation in the world's cities with trends for developing countries. Statistics about Third World families, and the conditions under which they live, were presented by extensive tables.

Advocacy is so very important for the good of all children everywhere. In an active parenting class we are presenting in Rancho Bernardo a phrase caught my attention. "Healthy children usually grow up to be healthy productive adults. Unhealthy children often grow up to be unproductive and sometimes dangerous adults."

The health and well being of the world's children is of vital concern to each of us since we are linked for a lifetime to them. When we are the senior citizens, they will be making the rules, which we will have to abide by!

This report concluded with implications for California caregivers that were affirmed by other members of the class:

Experiences like this which cause us to look at people's cultural heritage and to learn ways we can honor their customs while sharing the best we have to offer are a step in the right direction! Other areas of education are becoming available including anti-bias curriculum for preschool and brochures and other resource literature being printed in home languages of increasing numbers of groups. Education in working with parents to help them develop trust in us as individuals and as care givers is vital. A March 1988 issue of <u>Young Children</u> article about working effectively with parents included these points: 1) talk with the parents and understand their views; 2) understand the parent's developmental level and their educational level; 3) consider your own attitudes; 4) accept diversity; 5) get support, know when to refer parents to other agencies; 6) set appropriate limits on your care-giving role; 7) think about the words (and actions) you use; 8) provide a different kind of expertise with presenting a situation as "This is what I am seeing at school, are you seeing it at home?"

STUDENT FINDINGS:
THROUGH INTERVIEWS, QUESTIONNAIRES, AND BACKGROUND READINGS, CLASS MEMBERS DISCOVERED AND PERSONALIZED ALL ASPECTS OF THIS STUDY. LISTED BELOW ARE SOME GENERALIZED CONCLUSIONS.

Think of a mosaic, not a melting pot.

Appropriate terminology is difficult.

Distinguish between "voluntary" and "involuntary" immigrants. Understand culture shock, family breakup, and fears of deportation.

Bilingual/bicultural children should not be viewed as handicapped.

Don't confuse the culture of poverty with the culture of a country of origin.

Written literacy and numeracy may have been unimportant in countries of origin, or may have greater significance than here.

Parents expressed eagerness to explain their culture to the early childhood center staff.

Working with parents instead of talking at them builds cooperative attitudes.

Despite group characteristics, wide variations emphasized individuality and the hazards of generalizing.

Developing linkages requires special effort. It is worth it.

EVALUATION:
QUESTIONNAIRE MAILED TO ALL 20 CLASS
MEMBERS SIX MONTHS AFTER PROJECT COMPLETION.
14 RESPONSES:

1. Overall, this project was a unique learning experience.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Don't know	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
9	5	0	0	0

2. The project was appropriate for an advanced administration class.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Don't know	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
6	8	0	0	0

3. The applicability of this project to my work since taking the class (i.e., usefulness in your present job or studies) has been

Significant	Moderate	Don't know	Very	Insignificant
6	8	0	0	0

4. Comments about how you view the project

I wasn't aware of many of the problems facing these families. I now feel better able to meet some of their needs-not only to meet them, but now, I want to meet them.